

Pug Moths in the Isle of Wight in 1976

By T. D. FEARNEHOUGH*

The 1976 season was a favourable one for the pugs in this area, for not only were the moths about in greater numbers than usual, but also the larvae were remarkably free from the parasites which are prevalent amongst them in most years.

The first specimen of the season was of *Eupithecia abbreviata* Steph., found at rest on a telephone pole at Ninham on 15th April. During this month larvae of *E. tenuiata* Hbn. were present in small numbers in willow catkins at Alverstoke. *E. venosata* F. seems to be a scarce species here, for attempts to find larvae in previous years have been unsuccessful. However, on 18th June an isolated clump of bladder campion at Merston contained a larva in almost every seed head. The larvae were successfully reared on heads of red campion and were free from parasites. The usual few specimens of *E. intricata arceuthata* Freyer appeared at light in my garden during June. A specimen of *E. tantillaria* Boisd. was found on a spruce trunk on 16th June when searching for *Thera variata* D. & S.

E. haworthiata Dbldy. was an exception to the general increase, for larvae of this species normally so common in the chalk region were very scarce. None could be found in several localities tried, but eventually three larvae were found on *Clematis* on Row Down on 29th July. Tapping along hedges in June disturbed numerous *E. vulgata* Haw., a few *E. castigata* Hbn. and a single specimen of *E. fraxinata* Crewe. Species which came to light in the garden in larger numbers than usual were: *E. icterata* de Villiers, *E. centaureata* L., *E. vulgata*, *E. castigata* and the *Chloroclystis* species *coronata* Hbn. and *rectangulata* L. Single specimens of *E. tripunctaria* H.-S. and *E. sobrinata* Hbn. also occurred.

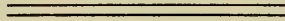
A specimen of *E. expallidata* Dbldy. came to light at Shanklin on 8th August. There appears to be no definite previous record for this species on the Island. I do not know of any locality for its foodplant in the neighbourhood. *E. phoeniceata* Rambur also came to light at Shanklin for the first time, but it has been recorded before on the Island at Freshwater by S. Knill-Jones. In all, four specimens were noted on 17th, 18th, 21st and 30th August.

Only one specimen of *E. pulchellata* Steph. came to light during the season, and searching for larvae of this species in various localities proved fruitless. Few specimens of *E. absinthiata* Cl. were attracted to light, but an isolated clump of ragwort growing in a small open space in Rowlands Wood gave no fewer than 14 larvae, presumably all of this species. They were reared on Michaelmas Daisy flowers, but half of them contained parasites.

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A successful search for larvae of *E. subnotata* Hbn. was made at St. Helens on 5th September. They were found on plants of orache growing along the border of the salt marsh. These larvae proved to be free from parasites and were successfully reared on flower sprays of Good King Henry, which was fortunately at hand in a neighbouring weedy garden. In early September a number of pug larvae were found on Michaelmas Daisy flowers. Several moths which emerged in October were those of *G. pumilata* Hbn.

I ought to mention several unsuccessful searches that I made. The wonderful show of maple blossom in the spring tempted me to try for larvae of *E. inturbata* Hbn., which has never been recorded from the Island, but no larvae were forthcoming. Larvae of *E. plumbeolata* Haw. were recorded by Prout from Bordwood in 1908. The foodplant cow-wheat still grows there, but searching by daytime disturbance, dusking and for larvae having failed over several seasons, I fear the moth is no longer with us. A concentrated effort to find larvae of *E. millefoliata* Rössler has also been fruitless, although there is a record of a larva found on Tennyson Down some years ago.



THE LARGE TORTOISESHELL (*NYMPHALIS POLYCHLOROS* L.). — Mr. H. J. Belsey in his account of the butterflies of the Dordogne (*Ent. Rec.*, **89**: 49-50), asks the explanation of the habit of the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly entering the house in midsummer. This is the regular habit of this univoltine species which, after a few days flight on hatching in late June, aestivates in hollow trees, old sheds, attics, etc., as quoted from Verity in my note on its life-history (*Ent. Rec.*, **79**: 243-5), reappears on the wing in late summer, then hibernates and oviposits in the following spring, truly a long imaginal stage! — E. P. WILTSHIRE, 140 Marsham Court, Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4JY.

CLEPSIS RURINANA (L.) (= SEMIALBANA (GUENEE) IN SCOTLAND. — In July 1975, some members of Imperial College made a Field Study of the Loch Ness area. Dr. Jim Brock had asked if I would identify some microlepidoptera which were collected there by Miss Anne Cameron. Among them I was very interested to find two specimens of *Clepsis rurinana* taken at Foyers. The identity of the more worn specimen was confirmed by genitalia examination. In *British Tortricoid Moths* (1973) a Scottish record is confirmed from Argyll and there are mentioned unconfirmed records from Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Arran. In any event, this locality in Inverness represents a considerable extension northwards of the known range of the species. — DAVID AGASSIZ, St. James' Vicarage, 144 Hertford Road, Enfield, Middx.